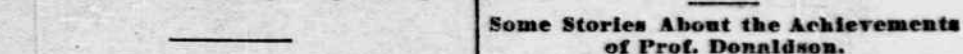


## IN LOCAL STUDIOS | SIGHTLESS CAPITOL GUIDE.



The first "authorized" guide who ever served as such about the Capitol was "Prof." T. B. Donaldson. There is nothing remarkable about this statement, but when the additional statement is made that Prof. Donaldson was a blind man, there seems to be a contradiction in terms. Prof. Donaldson appeared here about the time the war closed, and he was a well-known sociologist, and a very good one—that is, a good phenologist. As a man he was not a very good man. He drank all the liquor he could conveniently get, played cards considerably, and was not very bright. It is understood when a man is crying as a rounder.

There were a number of card rooms run by publicans those days in various parts of Philadelphia, and especially in the neighborhood of the hotels. To these Donaldson was a regular visitor. Of course, to play cards he had to have some cards, though in some that was not absolutely necessary, though very convenient. To play with all his rights, he was allowed to have a few high cards, and he knew the cards very well. Card players, as a rule, did not care to play with Donaldson, and he could not refuse to play from him when his high cards were

He was horse with on account of his inability for thoroughbred card players are generally a trifle supercilious. The professor never forgot that he was a phenologist, and he picked up fees constantly in his calling. As years ran along the professor's hair turned white, and he was living with considerable difficulty. His eyes were completely gone, and his disfigurement was covered up by large green goggles. In the famous debate on the French arms question, the Honorable Senators Sumner, Simon, Cameron, Logan, Thurman, Tipton, Schurz, Conkling, Morgan, and others played such prominent parts for and against the Grant administration that Prof. Donaldson was a regular visitor at the Senate gallery.

He never missed a session. He was a great friend of a friend of the Honorable Senator Conkling, who was one of his regular patrons, for things had come to such a pass with the professor financially that he was obliged to solicit aids. As he sat in the gallery, he would see the

was blind, would often ask him to point out and name the leading senatorial gladiators of that era. This the professor commoditously did. It was all right in the Senators were seated in their own chairs, but all very wrong if they happened to be in other seats.

"In the third seat on the right from the main aisle, second row," The Star writer once heard the professor say to a visitor to the gallery, "you see Charles Sumner without doubt the finest-looking man, the

most picturesque and the best-dressed man in the chamber. To his right, with a coverlet of red velvet and a cushion of blue velvet, sits Senator Henry Wilson. In the room on the left, sits the grandest one of them all, Roscoe Conkling, his hair being, you will no doubt notice, about the same shade of red as that of the Hon. Carl Schurz, who sits to the front of him and who is, in the opinion of the writer on the left; you will see standing Oliver P. Morton. Though a republican, he sits on the democratic side of the chamber, for he is paralyzed, he cannot stand alone, and has to be held up by an apparatus you will see to hold him up when he wishes to stand, which is very seldom, as he makes and has made for years, all of his great

He would go on with his entertaining descriptions in this way and give his hearers a better idea of the scene than could many who were possessed of sight. But it was not alone in the Senate he succeeded equally well. On the House side he was equally at home and entertaining. He knew the voice of every public man, and called out the name, before he had gone further than adduce a single fact.

tion. His description of the paintings in the rotunda and galleries was the result of listening to the observations of others.

Professor Donaldson always took special pride in showing to those under his guidance the many fine paintings in the gallery that appears by accident in Moran's painting of the Yosemite valley. In the old hall of the House of Representatives he was very much in evidence, and those who had his services as guide therein received much valuable information. He was not, however, even the best-informed of the present crop of guides do not always impart to those employing them. He was particularly at home with some of the interesting phases of our geology, though some things have been discovered since his time. He has no doubt, however, of facts that were as

He walked to the principal echo stones as directly as could any one, and never made a mistake. His "whispering gallery" descriptions up in the top of the dome were very fine, in the sense that they were novel and exact and showed that he had more than usual appreciation. The rush of visitors to the Capitol during the centennial year was very large, and to accommodate the same a corps of guides were organized. Several of the first "authorized" guides learned from persons told by Prof. Donaldson some of his best stories, and indeed, some of them are told today.

**THE BRUMIDI FRESCO.**

Various Suggestions as to the Subject of the Last Panel.

Architect Clark of the Capitol has received a photograph of the painting "The Driving of the Last Spike" on the Central Pacific railroad. He sent for it the purpose of submitting it to the consideration of the Senate and House committees on the subject.

tee on the library. This committee, which is a joint committee, and of which Senator Hansbrough is chairman, has charge of art matters in connection with the Capitol. By that power they have charge of the completion of the historical frieze in the belt of the rotunda of the Capitol, and is Mr. Clark's desire to have that uncom-

pleted work finished as promptly as possible. It has been nearly ten years since the work has been done on the frieze, though up to that time the work had been done with comparative promptness.

Brumidi, the artist who designed the work and had completed nearly one-half of it when he died, had prepared several sketches for the closing panels, and his reason to believe that they had been a

proved and adopted, but in this he was mistaken. It is not yet certain what scenes of American history will be depicted in the last two panels. When Costiginni was selected to complete the work, which was intended to illustrate the first one hundred years of American history, he found cha-

He explained the condition of things to the committee of the library, and asked their judgment as to what he should do. The committee told him to go ahead with the sketches that Brumidi had prepared.

and leave the last three for future consideration. Accordingly, he went on until he reached "The Finding of Gold in California," which he completed. This is the work which was done, and this was completed nearly ten years ago. Since then thousands and thousands have looked at his mining methods, supposing

into the swinging scarioids, supposing the time that work was going on, but nothing has been done, or will be done, in the library committee give the order. 3 Clark thinks that the library committee will order that the next panel show "The Drive of the Last Spike," depicting the scene where the Atlantic and Pacific were connected with

the iron tie. There will remain one main panel. Various suggestions have been made by artists and others in connection with it and many are yet to be made. It has been generally believed that it will contain, as rounding up of the country's century, a condensed representation of the principal buildings of the centennial exposition.

But the exact form by which this idea, it is indeed finally adopted, will be represented is as yet uncertain. A suggestion has recently been made to the library

mittee that the carrying out of the idea the centennial should be made the subject of a competition among artists, and that prize be offered sufficiently large to induce the best American artists to compete. The plan may be adopted, but it is as yet only conjecture. Another suggestion has been made that the last panel should show

**Fate.**

It is tough, but true," said the Cambridge sage, "that a man generally does not get any foresight until he is too old to have anything to look forward to."